



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BISHOP AND SCHUMER DEMAND FAA ACTION ON HELICOPTER TRAFFIC

Urge Agency to Make Helicopter Traffic Safer and Reduce Noise for Long Islanders

Washington, DC - Congressman Tim Bishop and Senator Charles Schumer sent a letter today to the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) demanding action on long-stalled regulations to mitigate residential helicopter noise. In response to growing concern over the impact of helicopters on the quality of life of Long Islanders, Bishop and Schumer urged the FAA to expedite consideration of requirements for helicopter traffic.

"I have heard from people all over Suffolk County who are fed up that the clear skies above their homes have turned into the LIE for helicopters," Bishop said. "Suffolk County residents are tired of the constant din of helicopter noise, and frankly, so am I. This is an important quality of life issue and the FAA needs to take immediate action to give families relief."

"The FAA needs to quit dragging its feet in responding with a real plan to mitigate the impact of constantly low-flying helicopter traffic over Long Island," Schumer said. Throughout the entire year, non-emergency helicopters cause major quality of life disruptions to North Shore communities and have proven to be a potential safety risk. I urge the FAA to work with us in immediately crafting the commonsense rules necessary to protect Long Islanders."

In the early 1980s, the FAA discontinued a regulatory solution to limit helicopter noise in favor of a self-policing policy. In the years since that voluntary noise abatement practice was implemented, it has been largely ignored. A copy of Bishop and Schumer's letter follows:

October 4, 2006

The Honorable Marion C. Blakey
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Blakey,

We are writing to express our concerns in response to frequent helicopter traffic above residential communities across Long Island that has diminished the quality of life for much of the population. We believe that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not adequately and effectively regulated helicopter traffic affecting Long Island. Therefore, we respectfully request that your agency initiate and expedite sorely needed curative measures in order to mitigate the devastating impact of helicopter operators over population centers.

Similar to other highly populated metropolitan areas, helicopter operators fly dozens of routes each day over Long Island. During the summer months, many of our constituents were disturbed at home and frequently distracted at work by the seemingly constant din of helicopter traffic overhead.

As you may recall, the FAA took steps in the past to begin regulation of helicopter routes and traffic as well as regulation of the parts of helicopters responsible for the noise in response to similar complaints about the same problem more than two decades ago in the form of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to lessen helicopter noise. However, the rulemaking process was discontinued when helicopter carriers addressed noise pollution by initiating voluntary efforts, which are regrettably no longer effective. With the FAA's recent completion of its Nonmilitary Helicopter Urban Noise Study, this is an appropriate opportunity for your agency to take the lead in mitigating the harmful effects of helicopter noise pollution.

We are pleased that your office completed its report to Congress, and hope you recognize that affected communities should not have to endure unrelenting and unnecessary noise pollution caused by regular helicopter traffic. Accordingly, we strongly urge you to act on the recommendations included in the Helicopter Noise Study by investigating further the need for industry reform and creating a federal template for voluntary noise reduction alternatives that all levels of government and the helicopter industry can follow. In addition, we urge you to consider the need of your agency to oversee helicopter operations in urban areas.

We look forward to working with you to address our concerns and thank you in advance for attention and consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Tim Bishop
Member of Congress

Charles Schumer
Member of Congress

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